

REMARKS

The Office Action of April 15, 2009, and the references cited therein have now been carefully studied. Reconsideration and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Initially, the undersigned wishes to thank Examiner Kingan for graciously conducting a telephonic interview with the undersigned on September 3, 2009. During the course of this interview, various prior art references were discussed as well as a proposal for amending claim 1 to overcome the rejection.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-10, 20 and 23 over the reference to Seki et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed with the Examiner during the aforementioned telephonic interview, the present invention is directed to a microfluidic arrangement containing a first channel 2 connected to a reservoir 1. The first channel 2 has several branch points directing the fluid into one of a plurality of second channels 6. Each of the second channels 6 as illustrated in FIG. 2 would have a recess 7. Extending from the recess 7 in each of the second channels would be a stopping means 9, such as a microfluidic valve. Extending from each of the stopping means, would be a third channel.

As shown in FIG. 2, the outlets of each of the third channels would be dispensed into separate output channels. This is important since separate procedures could be instituted for the fluid exiting from each of the third channels. As discussed with the Examiner, the reference to Seki et al would include only a common channel 22 into which all of the liquids from upstream channels would enter. This would also be the case with respect to the cited reference to Andersson et al which also includes only a common channel 210 into which all of the liquids would flow. Applicant has amended claim 1 to specifically indicate that the liquid exiting the microfluidic arrangement after flowing through one of the second channels does not mix with fluid exiting the microfluidic arrangement through any of the other second channels. This would be the case whether one or more third channels would be included. Applicant has also included new claim 52 which includes all of the recitations in amended claim 1 as well as to recite a plurality of third channels and the stopping means provided connected to the stopping means which is provided between the second and third channels. Furthermore, claim 53 has been added dependent from claim 52 in which the second channels have a section with a cavity in the form of a recess.

Finally, applicant has amended claim 1 to structurally distinguish the prior art in terms of structure and not include a method step therein. In this case, claim 1 has been amended to specifically indicate that each of the second channels would begin filling after the preceding channel has been filled due to the second channel having a greater capillary force than said first channel at

the branch points. It is believed that claim 1, as well as new claims 52 and 53 and any claim depending therefrom are not suggested or anticipated from the Seki or Andersson references.

The Examiner has rejected the remaining claims in this application based upon the Seki reference in combination with additional references. It is believed that since all of these claims depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, these claims also recite patentable subject matter.

During the course of the aforementioned interview, the undersigned discussed with the Examiner the fact that the prior art did not include a stopping means provided between the outlet of each of the second channels and the inlet of each of the third channels. Consequently, applicant has included herewith claim 51 which specifically recites this feature.

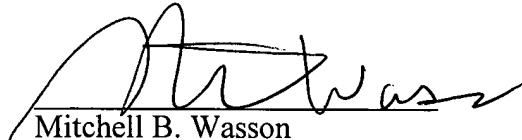
Since it is believed that all of the claims now in this application define the invention over the prior art cited by the Examiner, reconsideration and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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